

History Highlights

Before European settlement, the Secotan and Pamlico Indians, members of the Tuscarora tribe, occupied the area between Goose Creek and Bath. The Tuscaroras were the dominant tribe during the colonial period and conflicts arose between the Tuscaroras and settlers along the Pamlico, Neuse and Trent rivers. Well-known inhabitants of the area of Goose Creek included several royal governors and the notorious pirate Blackbeard.

In more recent times, life centered around subsistence farming, commercial fishing and timber production. Evidence of these activities exists throughout the park. Abandoned fields, once used for farming, have now returned to forests. Remnants of boat piers and loading docks skirt the river. A trackless railroad bed, used for hauling logs and the charred remains of tar kilns, are reminders of the early days of the timber industry.

Like many other state parks, Goose Creek originated due to the initiative of local citizens. At their appeal, the N.C. Division of State Parks investigated potential park sites along the Pamlico River and determined that the Goose Creek area was the most suitable. Negotiations for land acquisition began, and a resolution to the governor expressed local support. With the purchase of 1,208 acres of land, Goose Creek State Park opened in September, 1974. The park currently contains 1,667 acres.



Nature's Classroom

Rangers hold regularly scheduled educational and interpretive programs about Goose Creek State Park. Contact the park office to arrange a special exploration of Goose Creek State Park for your group or class.

Educational materials about Goose Creek State Park have been developed for grades 4-6 and are correlated to North Carolina's competency-based curriculum in science, social studies, mathematics and English/language arts.

The Goose Creek State Park program introduces students to wetland processes and functions and discusses how wetlands affect humans and the area's natural environment. The program also focuses on water quality, resource management, adaptations and stewardship. Accompanying the program is a teacher's booklet and workshop, free of charge to educators.

Flora & Fauna

Large grasses and sedges, including sawgrass and black needlerush, dominate the beautiful brackish marshes near the Pamlico River. These plants thrive in the salty, low-lying, water-logged area. Growing up to eight feet, they provide food and shelter for resident waterfowl. Morning glory, crested dwarf iris and rose and seashore mallows add color along the waterways.

Evergreen shrubs and trees grow in the ecotone between marsh and swamp. Shrubs include wax myrtle, red bay and groundsel tree. Red cedar and loblolly pine trees form over story. The brackish marsh gradually fades into swamp where a canopy of black gum, tupelo, red maple, bald cypress and ash reaches up to 90 feet. Wax myrtle, gallberry and red bay are abundant in the understory. Pennywort and ferns flourish in the boggy freshwater swamp. Goose Creek State Park has one of the furthest northern populations of dwarf palmetto, which can be found along the Pamlico River and within the marshes. Spanish moss drapes trees throughout the park but is most abundant in the swamp forests and along the creeks. Bald cypress thrives along Goose and Mallard creeks while black willows grow in the interior lowlands. Large, spreading live oak trees are found along creeks and river banks.

Impressive specimens of loblolly and longleaf pines are located in upland regions of the park. Some of these pines reach 100 feet. A diversity of hardwoods, including hickory and oak, compete with the pines. Shade-tolerant shrubs and ferns flourish below.

Goose Creek is a haven for birds. The brackish marshes are home to marsh wrens, waterfowl, rails and several species of herons and egrets. Barred owls and red-shouldered hawks reside in the wooded swamps and shrub thickets. Bird life at Goose Creek varies dramatically with the seasons. In the spring, year-round residents are joined by a host of aviates who arrive from the south to nest. The growing population of osprey and bald eagles is an environmental success story, considering their declining numbers years ago due to DDT.

In cooler weather, the nearby Pamlico Sound is a major wintering area for waterfowl. Ducks, including bufflehead, scaup and ruddy ducks, enjoy the open water adjacent to the park. In addition, black ducks, mallards and wood ducks inhabit the creeks and swamps. Tundra swans and Canada geese also winter in the area and have been seen on occasion at Goose Creek.

Frogs, turtles and snakes enjoy the wetlands of Goose Creek. Even though the water is slightly saline, snakes, including the banded and red-bellied water snakes and the venomous cottonmouth, are present. Minks, muskrats, raccoons and river otters enjoy the brackish marshes. A variety of other mammals, including gray squirrels, opossums and white-tailed deer, find food and protective cover throughout the park. Marsh rabbits live in moist areas, while eastern cottontails prefer the drier uplands. The tracks of elusive bobcats, black bears, gray foxes and red wolves testify to the presence of these rarely encountered creatures.



Hiking Trails

Flatty Creek Trail loops through an upland forest and incorporates short stretches of boardwalk across wetlands. The trail features an elevated observation deck affording views of both Goose Creek and the Pamlico River.

Goose Creek Trail is almost two miles long, running from the campground at the mouth of Goose Creek to the Pamlico riverfront. Boardwalks pass through black gum and cypress swamps.

Huckleberry Trail winds its way through patches of huckleberries and acts as a connector-trail between Live Oak and Mallard Creek trails.

Ivey Gut Trail winds through the forest and provides peeks of Upper Goose Creek through trees along the way.

Live Oak Trail features a canopy of live oaks draped with Spanish moss. This loop-trail follows the shoreline of the Pamlico River for a short distance and then turns inland and passes a historic cemetery dating from the 1880s.

Palmetto Boardwalk Trail is handicap accessible and features a rambling boardwalk across a freshwater marsh. A junction with Tar-Kiln Trail head can be found at the base of the boardwalk.

Mallard Creek Trail takes visitors to a small overlook on Mallard Creek, where red-winged blackbirds, herons and egrets have been spotted. Tar-Kiln Trail originates along this trail at about the half-way mark.

Tar-Kiln Trail is the newest in the park's trail system. Located between Mallard Creek and Palmetto trails, remnants of the long leaf pine logging industry of the 1800s and early 1900s are still evident here. Several tar kilns have been marked along the trail.

A full service, online and call center-based reservations system is being developed and will be unveiled summer 2009. Check the Web site for more details www.ncparks.gov.



On The Water

Boating: The boat ramp at Dinah's Landing on the west side of Goose Creek is conveniently located near the river. Motorboating, sailing and windsurfing are popular activities. Regulations of N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission apply.

Paddling: Tall, overhanging trees lining the creek banks and graceful water birds create a peacefulness best experienced by canoe or kayak. Day users can access Goose Creek from Dinah's Landing while overnight campers can put in at the end of the campground road. For special needs access, please contact the park office. Paddlers must make arrangements to bring vessels with them, as there are none for rent in the park. Be alert to storms and always wear a life vest.

Fishing: Fish in the creek or the river. Both have plenty of freshwater and saltwater fish, especially in warmer weather. Species include largemouth bass, bluegill and white and yellow perch. A state fishing license is required. The rules of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission apply.

Swimming: Follow a short path from parking lot #2, through the main picnic area, to the designated swimming area. A sandy beach offers access to the shallow waters of the Pamlico River. The swimming area is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, free of charge. Please be aware that there are no lifeguards on duty.

Camping

A primitive family campground is located between Goose and Flatty creeks. Twelve well-spaced tent sites amid large pines draped in Spanish moss include tables and grills. Toilet facilities and water are available nearby. Sites are available on a first-come basis for a fee. A group campsite is also available from March 1 through Dec. 1 by reservation only.



Visitor Center

Goose Creek State Park has the right tools to open your eyes to world of wetland nature. Explore the natural side of Goose Creek at the park's environmental education and visitor center. Visitors are greeted with animal mounts and interactive wetland exhibits as soon as they enter the lobby. In addition, a five-minute film is available to introduce visitors to the park and its creatures.

Enter the Discovery Room and explore the center further. Visitors can learn even more about animals that live in the wetlands. Mounts, replicas and animal signs, both on tabletops and in pullout drawers, allow close-up study and encourage hands-on learning.

The Discovery Room also has a bird observation station — a table with an excellent view of the bird feeders outside. Sit down and wait to see which birds stop by. Or, pause by the outside butterfly garden to view another winged creature of the park.

Educational facilities available for groups include a resource room, wet lab and multipurpose auditorium. Enjoy a screened outdoor classroom that is a short walk from the center. It offers classroom comfort among the towering trees of a mixed hardwood forest. Or, watch one of the park's nature films in the auditorium. The opportunities for learning at Goose Creek State Park are abundant.

Find out what plants and animals you can see at Goose Creek. Visit our Web site at www.ncparks.gov.

Pack A Picnic



Main Picnic Area: Located near the riverfront, this is a pleasant spot for lunch or dinner after a leisurely hike or a refreshing swim. In the midst of a mixed forest, the area is spacious enough to accommodate several families. A picnic shelter houses six tables, one of which is handicap accessible, with two adjacent grills. Eight open-air tables and three additional grills are placed throughout. Four additional tables are located nearby at the swim beach.

Flicker Field Picnic Area: Conveniently located across from the visitor center, this shelter contains eight tables with two adjacent grills. One grill, as well as one of the tables, is handicap accessible. Four additional tables, sit under trees at the edge of the open field, providing a perfect space for family activities such as kite flying or a game of tag.

Rules & Regulations

Make your visit a safe and rewarding experience. Some of our rules are posted throughout the park for the protection of our park and our visitors. A complete list is available at the park office. Help preserve our natural resources by observing the following:

☐ The removal of any plant, animal, artifact or mineral is prohibited.

☐ Maintain a clean environment by putting trash in proper receptacles. State law requires aluminum cans to be placed in recycling containers.

☐ Firearms and fireworks are prohibited.

☐ The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

☐ North Carolina motor vehicle and traffic laws apply in the park.

☐ North Carolina state parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting and trapping are not permitted.

☐ Boating and fishing regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission apply in the park.

☐ Swimming is permitted only in the designated swimming area.

☐ Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet.

☐ Camping is allowed in designated areas by permit only.

☐ Fires are permitted only in designated areas.

For Your Safety

To prevent accidents, please remember these safety tips.

☐ Do not feed or approach wildlife. North Carolina is experiencing a rise in rabies cases. Report sick or aggressive animals to park staff.

☐ Do not swim alone. Keep a friend within reach. Observe fish-kill warnings, if posted.

☐ Wear a life vest and use caution when boating. Do not go boating alone.

☐ Venomous snakes and poison ivy may be encountered along park trails. Be alert.

☐ Goose Creek is heavily infested with ticks during warm weather months. Insect repellent may help prevent a tick bite and the possibility of disease. Tuck trousers into long socks and tuck a long-sleeved shirt into pants. Wear light colors to easily spot ticks, and check often.

Contact park staff for other safety tips or for an explanation of park rules.

Welcome!

At first you'll notice the unhurried rhythm of nature — quiet, slow-moving creeks, graceful waterbirds, gently swaying Spanish moss. Next you'll notice the leisurely pace of park visitors — canoeists paddling along the waterways, naturalists enjoying the seashore mallow brought by a summer morn, fishermen casting baited lines into shaded nooks. Nowhere is the art of relaxation more effectively expressed than at Goose Creek State Park.



Giant old oaks draped in Spanish moss welcome you to this special world where broad, lazy Goose Creek joins the Pamlico River. A primitive camping area, picnic sites, swim beach, hiking trails and paddling trails offer a variety of ways to savor the tranquil surroundings at Goose Creek State Park. Located between Bath and Washington, Goose Creek is the perfect place to unwind and soak up the peacefulness. A hectic pace is not permitted.

Information

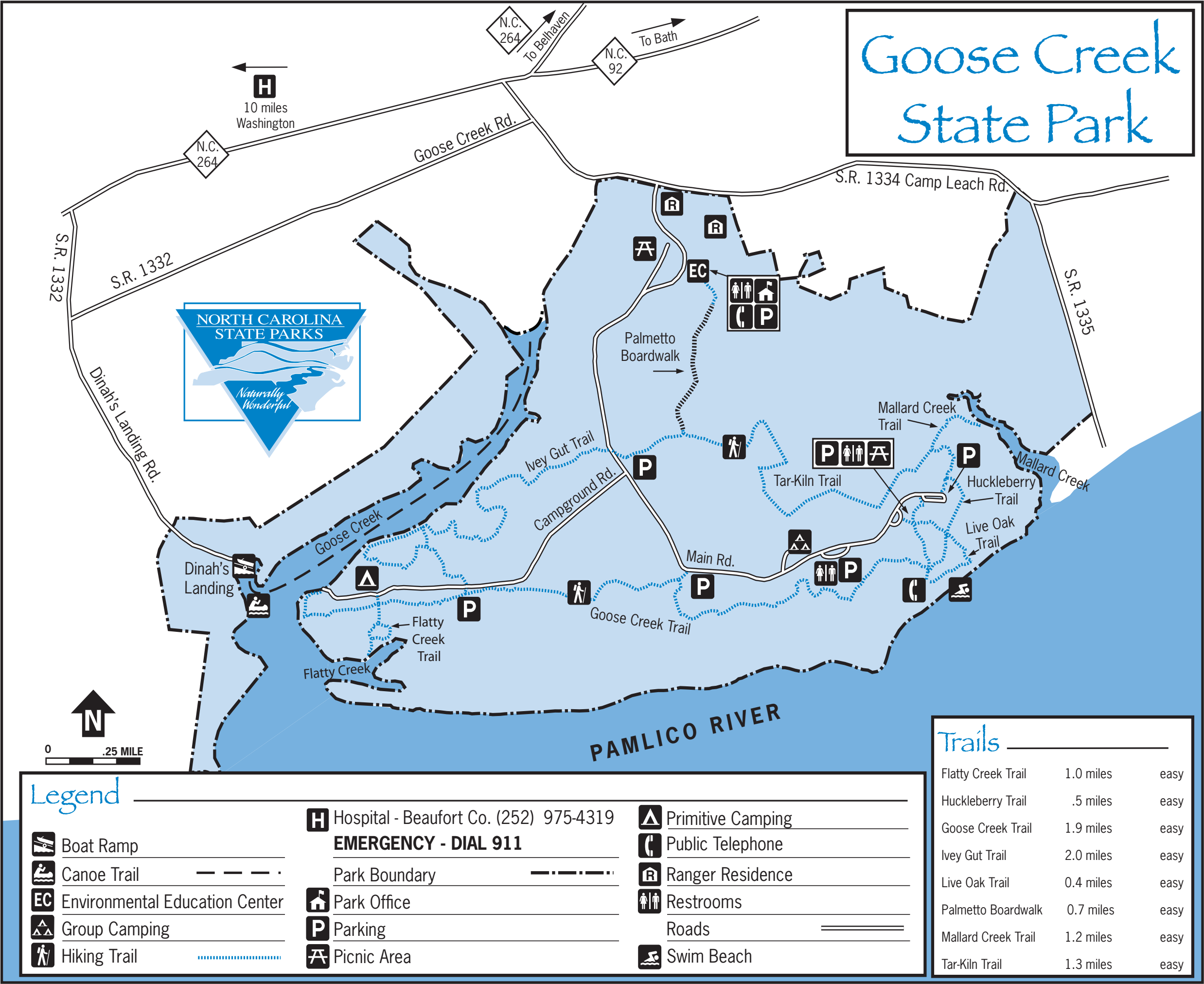
To learn more about Goose Creek State Park, contact:

Goose Creek State Park
2190 Camp Leach Road
Washington, NC 27889
(252) 923-2191
goose.creek@ncmail.net

Discover other North Carolina state parks and recreation areas, contact:

N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources
1615 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615
(919) 733-4181
www.ncparks.gov

Printed with vegetable based inks on 100% recycled paper, produced with wind-generated electricity. This publication is recyclable. When you have finished with it, help save our earth by sharing it with a friend, returning it to the park, or placing it in an appropriate recycling bin.

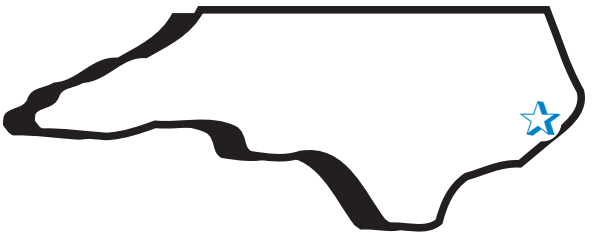


N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
Department of Environment and Natural Resources



Goose Creek
State Park

Goose Creek
State Park



Goose Creek State Park is located in Beaufort County on the north side of the Pamlico River. From Washington, follow U.S. 264 east for 10 miles. Then turn right onto Camp Leach Road and travel 2.5 miles to the park entrance.

Park Hours

November-February	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
March - May, September & October	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
June - August	8 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Closed Christmas Day	